

Member's Quarterly

Summer 2022 Edition

Feature

Navigating Social Media Platforms

Mining the information more effectively

For years, employers have known that social media may hold key information relating to ongoing investigations, claims and incidents around their workplace. The challenge has always been how to navigate the massive amounts of posts and content out there to discover what is relevant to you.

In years past, employers would often depend on the IT or "computer savvy" person within their office to take a look at the content that may be out there; however, in doing so, they often opened themselves up to leaving behind digital footprints which could negatively impact the future of their investigations.

Private investigation companies have also been utilized. When employers turn to social media or open-source investigators to locate, mine and archive key information for them, employers lowered their risk of leaving behind digital footprints. This allows them to move forward with surveillance or statements as required, without the investigation already being known to the person(s) of interest.

With the ever-changing platforms, including Facebook removing the key search capabilities with no notice to investigators or government bodies, we must turn to the technology of the future to continue mining this information effectively.

Social media listening platforms, also known as data recovery platforms, are a prime example of the emerging technologies that are being advanced. These platforms are the next level in open source or social media investigations.

Where these programs excel is in communication with the providers, meaning that they have negotiated contracts with the major social media platforms which allows for the exchange of information. In some cases, this may mean obtaining more information than what is available to the average user, all while abiding by their terms of service. For example, Twitter drastically reduces the information the average user can see to approximately 10 percent of the information available on the platform. Many data recovery platforms have access to all the content posted to Twitter with no restrictions.

Uses for platforms such as these may include the following:

Geo-fencing - Imagine a digital net which is deployed over a specified location and captures all public social media posts from within the area. This tool is especially useful for things such as strike mitigation, allowing you to review the content of the posts within a workplace and determine what complaints, if any, are being shared by the staff therein. This tool may also reveal which employees are instigating job actions and which employees are revealing confidential information related to negotiations in the event of a strike.

Witness locates - This is useful for issues such as slip and fall, workplace injury, theft or vandalism. Social media is the first stop for people sharing content relating to these events. When a post is shared about a situation such as these, data recovery programs may give you a direct link, including username, to those who saw the event in real-time. More beneficial, if these posts are captured within these tools, they are archived, even if the original poster tries to take the content down. In conjunction with a skilled investigator, you can locate the witness and obtain statements within days, rather than months.



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Brand protection – Searching by company name, brand name or product name, these platforms will obtain all public conversation relating to a product or company. In addition, most platforms go further than the average surface web search, allowing for searches into the deep web such as forums and specified interest groups to determine how people discuss your company, products and reputation.

Sentiment analysis – Now that you've found the posts, these tools will allow you to review the sentiment, positive or negative, around what people are saying. Not only this, it can also identify who is the biggest supporter and the biggest critic of your organization.

These social media monitoring platforms are still in development. However, in our experience as investigators, there is no question that they will be the future in navigating social media and open-source investigations. Even in their infancy, these platforms have become an invaluable tool in the acquisition and retrieval of data.

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